DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 268 209 UD 024 830

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TITLE The Educational Experience of Sydney High School Students. Report No. 1: A Comparative Study of Migrant Students of Non-English-Speaking Origin and Students Whose Parents Were Born in an English-Speaking Country.
INSTITUTION Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, Canberra.; Australian Dept. of Education, Canberra.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-642-04360-4
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 46p.; For reports 2 and 3 in this series, see UD 024 831-832.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Academic Aspiration; Educational Attainment; *Educational Experience; Equal Education; Ethnic Groups; Ethnic Origins; Foreign Countries; High Schools; *High School Students; *Immigrants; Limited English Speaking; *Non English Speaking; Occupational Aspiration; Self Esteem; Student Attitudes; Student School Relationship
IDENTIFIERS *Australia (Sydney); English Speaking

ABSTRACT

An overview of the preliminary findings of a large-scale longitudinal (1974-77) survey of the educational needs and social problems of immigrant students in Sydney, Australia, is presented in this report. Four findings are treated as most significant: (1) Differences among immigrants of different non-English-speaking background are so great that to pool them in a single category is often misleading. (2) In confirmation of previous studies, large numbers of students from non-English-speaking ethnic groups reject the "institutional ideology" of their school by clinging to high aspirations and staying at school despite a low level of performance as the school assesses it. (3) The theories of the "stunting" and "liberating" effects of immigration do not adequately explain the experiences of the students studied. (4) Because the survey stops at the point at which the students leave school, its results cannot be used to predict how the subjects will fare when they face employers and tertiary institutions. In view of these findings the educational system is called upon to break the dominance of the "institutional ideology" and to better serve children of low IQ and low socioeconomic status whom it now does its best to throw off. It is further recommended that resources be used to dislodge the explicit anti-immigrant prejudices of some schools, and that resources are also needed for monitoring and for further research. References and statistical data are appended. (KH)

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# The Educational Experience of Sydney High School Students

Report No. 1

Jean I. Martin and Phil Meade

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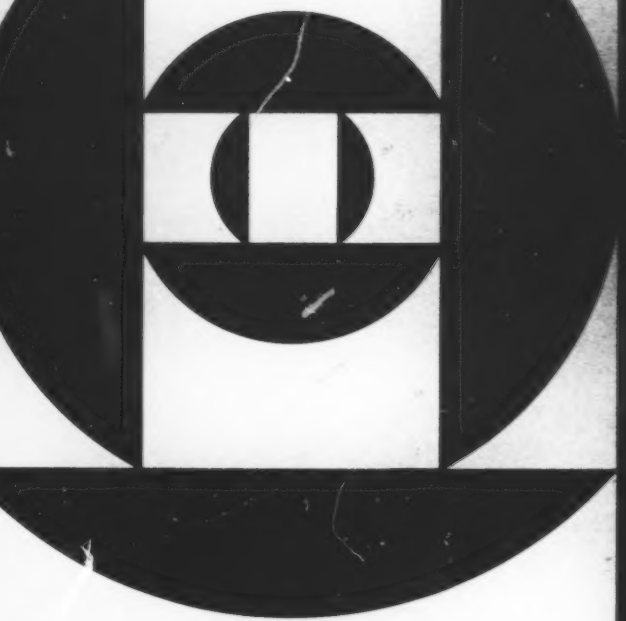

Commonwealth Department of Education
Academy of Social Sciences in Australia

COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND
ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

# THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF SYDNEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

## A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MIGRANT STUDENTS OF NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING ORIGIN AND STUDENTS WHOSE PARENTS WERE BORN IN AN ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRY

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING SERVICE
CANBERRA 1979

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ISBN 0 642 04360 4

Printed by Canberra Reprographic Printers, 119 Wollongong Street, Fyshwick, A.C.T.

This is the first report available in the Survey of Sydney High School Students by Dr Jean Martin and Dr Phil Meade. It is the first study to include longitudinal data on the progress of migrant high school children. This report is an overview of the main findings. Progressive reports on the detailed findings of the study will be published as they become available.

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## BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The longitudinal survey of Sydney school-children, whose preliminary findings we are presenting here, was the outcome of recommendations on the need for research on child migrant education made by the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council (CIAC) in 1972. Following increased debate in schools, in parliament and in the media (particularly in Victoria) about the difficulties experienced by migrant school-children, the Commonwealth had established the Child Migrant Education Program (CMEP) in 1970 (see Martin and Willcock eds., 1976). CMEP was concerned essentially with teaching English to children of non-English-speaking origin; the Committee on Migrant Education of the CIAC wanted tests of competence in English developed and the program as a whole evaluated. The committee also expressed the view that 'the linguistic aspect of migrant education is important, but not the only aspect ...' and directed attention to the 'social aspects of migrant education' (Zubrzycki, 1972). The Commonwealth responded by deciding to fund a research program initially, through the Department of Immigration then through the Department of Education; the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia agreed to act as sponsor as part of its long-standing commitment to migration studies. (Subsequently the Australian National University and the University of New South Wales also provided financial support.) The program has so far produced two main publications: a bibliography and historical essay on the education of migrant children in Australia (Martin and Willcock eds., 1976) and a monograph on Initial Adjustment to Schooling of Immigrant Families (Taft and Cahill, 1978). As a separate part of the program, the Australian Council for Educational Research undertook and subsequently completed test development.

As originally conceived, the research program did not embrace a large-scale survey, but it soon became apparent that neither census data nor the fragments of research already in existence yielded much insight into the 'social aspects of migrant education'. We therefore agreed to take responsibility for what we shall call the Sydney survey 1974-77.

The first stage of collecting the data began in late 1974, within a matter of months after the decision to survey a representative sample of school-children (including non-migrants) was taken. Such a short lead time was possible only because one author had just completed a study of the aspirations of Sydney high school students, comparing sexes and socio-economic classes (although this did not include comparison of migrants and Australians) (Meade, 1978), and the other had already been working for some time on the migrant education literature (Martin, 1978).

## THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

Our original theoretical approach reflected two influences: the dominant theme of equality in the sociology of education literature in the early seventies and the mounting criticism in Australia of the disadvantaged position of migrants of non-English-speaking background. It belonged to what Michael Flude (in Flude and Ahier eds., 1974:29) has called a 'continuing tradition in the sociology of education', that is, 'a concern to secure a more or less perfect relationship between measured ability, educational opportunity and performance'.

In the course of the study, however, we came to embed this orientation within two other theoretical traditions. One lies in the broad field of the sociology of knowledge and identifies the education system as, above all, a reality-defining and confirming institution: the 'Institutional Ideology'. The field to which the other belongs is less coherent and obvious: it concerns mobility from one socio-cultural milieu to another, specifically migration as either a stunting or liberating experience: the 'Migration Experience'. Our conception of these two traditions is outlined below.

### The Institutional Ideology

The first sees what goes on in schools as structured in terms of the participants' 'knowledge' (their definitions of reality) of the functions of schooling and the educational practices through which these functions can best be fulfilled. This includes assessment of how well existing practices are working, solutions to problems and explanations of why things go wrong. Although this knowledge is not all-of-a-piece, but marked by contradictions, ambiguities and gaps, certain definitions of reality dominate the education system. We call these the Institutional Ideology. This Ideology derives from and sustains the school's articulation of two systems of accreditation: on the one hand, the accreditation of teachers, educational administrators etc. for employment; and, on the other, the accreditation of children in the

post-school educational and occupational structures. The career structure of teachers is predicated on the application of 'universal' definitions of teachers' qualifications, commitment and effectiveness. The structures that allocate young people selectively to tertiary education and jobs are predicated on the application of 'universal' definitions of student competence.

For the purpose of this discussion, we want to focus on particular aspects of the Institutional Ideology (others we shall ignore altogether). The basic one is ability or, in common parlance, brightness. We do not need to rehearse the well-known and devastating criticisms of institutionalised measures of brightness that are treated as objective, culture-free and value-free, but we can summarise our working understanding of the processes by which schools define brightness by saying three things. First, conventional measures of brightness span an extremely limited range of cognitive abilities and exclude cognitive and non-cognitive capacities that are highly valued in diverse contexts in the larger society. Second, teachers operate with concepts of 'normal' performance, that is, norms appropriate to particular categories or streams of students. (Nell Keddie quotes a teacher who described a group of hardworking pupils in stream C by saying 'They're as good as Bs', in Young, 1971:139.) And third, these concepts make a major contribution to the differentiated school environment and opportunities experienced by different children.

The high school thus fulfils varying functions for children according to how bright it defines them to be. It should give bright children every educational opportunity, encourage them to have confidence in their own ability and motivate them to aspire high and work hard so that they leave school accredited to enter tertiary institutions and ultimately high status occupations. The Institutional Ideology is not so concerned with less bright children; it gives the high school simply the residual function of trying to ensure that these children reach a minimum level of competence in literacy and numeracy, that they are steered away from unrealistic goals and motivated to enough self-discipline and industry to free the school to concentrate on their more favoured peers.

To the extent that teachers, other school staff and bureaucrats, parents and students share, or at least agree to operate on, this common Ideology, the school careers of students will be highly predictable and consistent. But where this congruence does not exist, the connection between brightness, educational opportunity, aspirations/motivation and accreditation will break down. Lack of congruence may manifest itself in diverse ways. Three major sources of ideas that run counter to the Institutional Ideology are the definitions of reality embodied in sex role differentiation, in class differentiation and in ethnic differentiation. Each of these perspectives provides a base from which to challenge or reject the nexus that the Ideology asserts between performance, opportunity, motivation/aspirations and accreditation. Sex role perspectives accept the bright child career as more appropriate for boys than for girls. Class perspectives introduce the idea, among those in higher class positions, that accreditation should not depend on brightness. The influence of this view in high schools is attenuated however, by the fact that families who subscribe to it tend to send their children to independent schools. Among those in lower class positions there is scepticism that the school acknowledges the brightness of the lower class child or seriously tries to transform that brightness into accreditation. Ethnic differentiation produces a number of perspectives that deny the association between performance and aspirations and that also insist on defining the school as, above all, a socialising rather than an accrediting agency - the job of the school is to turn migrant children into Australians (see Martin and Meade, 1979).

The dominance of the Institutional Ideology is undermined not only by the influence of these 'external' perspectives but also by the incongruence between the school's two accrediting functions. The operation of the authority structure, on which teacher accreditation depends, creates such tensions and alienation that the function of accrediting students can be carried out only very imperfectly. (In an analysis of teachers' questionnaires from the Sydney survey, Sheppard (1978:9) has shown that 'lack of discipline among their students was the single problem most frequently mentioned' in answer to the question, 'What are the three most difficult problems which secondary teachers

today have to overcome?'). That is to say, preserving order in the classroom and stability in the school often takes precedence over the job of transforming brightness into aspirations/motivation, performance and accreditation. Some bright students leave school to free themselves from the school's control, while less bright students sometimes stay on, challenge the teachers' authority, and influence classroom practice by refusing to act in terms of teachers' definitions of who they are, what they want, and why (see Moscovici, 1976; Sharp and Green, 1975). Nevertheless the influence of students in bringing about changes that they wish to see - as distinct from winning sporadic concessions or eliciting ad hoc repression on the part of teachers - is weak. Their motivation to try to change the authority structure and classroom practice is also weak because school involves them only temporarily and they look to the jobs and tertiary institutions they will move into once they leave school for the fulfilment of their true identities and interests. To define childhood and adolescence as preparation for the future - as the Institutional Ideology implies - aligns both with the function of schools in accrediting students and with the enervating and compromising effect of young people's orientation away from the school to what they see as the real world beyond.

The Migration Experience

The second theoretical tradition that has informed our work relates to the migration experience. Stunting and liberating theories of migration have often been presented as alternatives. So far as the individual is concerned, stunting theories emphasise those aspects of migrancy that are believed to produce insecurity, loss of a sense of identity and personal disorganisation; liberating theories direct attention to those aspects that release the individual from confining social and cultural bonds, and so free his creative and critical faculties, and to the maturity and insight to be gained by 'experienced participants in more than one culture' (Keddie ed., 1973:10). At the group level, stunting theories associate migrants with other subordinated minorities and concentrate on the defensive nature of migrant group organisation, group self-hatred and the tendency for migrant groups to become the scapegoats for the

failures of the established community; liberating theories, on the other hand, are concerned with the fresh vision brought to bear by migrants as 'strangers' (see Schutz, 1971) their role as innovators and catalysts for social change (see Moscovici, 1976) and even as prodders of slumbering conscience (see Martin, 1972; Richards, 1978).

Stunting theories overlap with theories of cultural deprivation in the sense that the failure of children of lower socioeconomic and ethnic background to thrive in school is attributed to the intellectual poverty of their homes and the limitations of their pre-school learning opportunities, as the result of which 'normal development' is inhibited and the child's maturational ceiling is lowered' (Keddie ed., 1973:11).

The climate of opinion that led the CIAC to promote the need for research on migrant schooling was dominated by the view of migration as a stunting, or at least a problem-generating, experience. In the monograph mentioned above, Taft and Cahill (1978:107) refer to this view and the fact that their own research did not support it, so far as newly arrived children from South America were concerned:

> It might have been expected that the continual stress of having to adjust to a new culture, new situations and new social acquaintances, combined with frustration and failures, would have produced much more unhappiness than was detected.

## THE SAMPLE AND THE DATA

The simplest way of showing how these theoretical orientations informed our research is to describe the sample and the data we collected. From 168 state high schools in the Sydney metropolitan area we selected a stratified cluster sample of 16 schools (plus one pilot school). Stratification was based on school type (boys, girls, co-educational) and proportion of grade 9 children whose mothers were born in a non-English-speaking country. All the selected schools agreed to co-operate and continued to participate for the three years we collected data directly from students. The 3043 students in the project consist of the body of students who were in grade 9 in these 16 schools in 1974; they represent approximately 11% of all grade 9 students in state schools in Sydney in that year. Students who remained at school provided data for each of the three years 1974-76; in 1977 the only additional data we obtained were Higher School Certificate results. Altogether 1715 students left school before the end of grade 11; we followed up as many of these as we could trace (63%) by mail questionnaires and telephone. A further 120 students transferred to other schools or repeated a year and 41 students left New South Wales and could not be traced. In 1975 we interviewed the parents of a sub-sample of approximately 690 of the students; the sub-sample was weighted towards parents of non-English-speaking origin, many of whom had to be interviewed in their own language. In 1976 we added a teachers' questionnaire and 637 teachers responded, but the value of the data collected from teachers is limited by the fact that in a few of the 16 schools a low proportion of teachers answered.

The survey instruments are summarised in Table 1. For the sake of brevity we shall restrict further comment to the material collected from the students in school. This material can be grouped into five categories appropriate to the theoretical interests outlined above: personal and family background (age, sex, place of birth and age of arrival in Australia if born overseas, family composition, parents'

birthplaces and occupations); educational performance (ML & MQ tests of quantitative and linguistic ability and comprehension, Standard Progressive Matrices, GEFT) and accreditation (SC and HSC results); motivation/aspirations/self concept (hopes for future education and jobs, SEI, essays on 'What will your life be like in ten years time?'); school experience (work, e.g., degree of interest in subjects taken, hours of home study; peers, e.g., friendships, answers to the question 'What does it take to be a member of the leading crowd at your school?': teachers, e.g., teacher influence on aspirations, answers to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school': school, e.g.,answers to the question, 'Would you please tell us what you think are the good things about school and what you think are some problems of school?' essays on 'How does school affect teenagers?'); family and extra-school interests and social experience (e.g., parents' influence on aspirations, leisure pursuits, contacts with friends, neighbours and kin, membership of clubs, hours spent watching TV). From Table 1 and these examples of the data collected it will be apparent that the range of material we have is very wide indeed - from standardised, highly-structured tests such as the Standard Progressive Matrices to open-ended questions, sentence completions and essays. On most of the matters we regard as of central importance - e.g., students' attitudes to teachers - we have several sources of data, obtained over two or three years. The student questionnaires contained a core body of questions, mostly on aspirations, which was collected in each of the three years of the study.

Our particular interest in migrant children led us to include some questions that applied only to students of non-English-speaking origin (e.g., questions on attendance at special classes for learning English and at ethnic schools, language spoken in the home) and others designed to tap the attitudes of the whole sample to migrants (e.g., 'Write a few lines in answer to the question: how have migrants settled into this country?'). After trying out a number of definitions of 'migrant', we decided to do the main preliminary data analysis in terms of the classifications of parents' birthplaces in Table 2. The advantages of

these classifications are that they allow us to examine the experience of those migrant groups with enough individuals in the sample to warrant separate treatment, they distinguish children of mixed and homogeneous ethnic background, and they distinguish migrant children of English-speaking background from both Australians and other migrants.

## SELECTED FINDINGS

In this preliminary presentation of findings we can do no more than highlight selected trends. A monograph and volume of special papers at present in preparation will, we hope, do more justice to the depth and diversity of our material and methods of analysis, including, for example, the mathematical models depicting the multi-variate analyses.

These selected trends are presented in Tables 2-6 and Diagrams 1-3. Table 2 and Diagram 1 show the distribution of accreditation by parents' country of birth. The majority of students of all birthplace groups left before the HSC, but a substantially greater proportion of children of non-English-speaking origin than of Australian or other English-speaking origin continued to the HSC (41% compared with 30% and 35% respectively) and a greater proportion of the total number of students of non-English-speaking origin who were enrolled in grade 9 gained medium or high HSC results than did the Australian or other English-speaking children (26% compared with 22% and 24% respectively). There were marked variations among the proportion of the ethnic sub-groups who gained medium or high results (e.g., 32% of the Greek children were in this category compared with 14% of the Lebanese). At the same time there was some concentration of the Italian, Lebanese and Maltese students in the poorly accredited groups - that is, in the groups that left school before the SC or gained only a low SC result. There was also a comparatively smaller number of students of non-English-speaking origin in the middle range of the accreditation distribution, with medium or high SC, but no HSC: that is, those who did well in the SC and stayed on at school to the HSC.

In a first attempt to tie together the longitudinal data on individual students and relate these data to the tenets of the Institutional Ideology, we have developed a set of 42 profiles which classify all students according to three simple measures: whether, in

grade 9 or grade 10 or both, they aspired to continue to HSC (2 categories); their linguistic and quantitative IQ, measured in grade 9 (3 categories - high, medium and low); the accreditation with which they left school (7 categories which range from high HSC results to Left before SC). It should be emphasised that these profiles have not been constructed simply because they make sense to us. On the contrary they represent, we believe - in summarised form - a set of judgements that students, parents and teachers see as meaningfully interdependent.

The summary of these profiles in Table 3 shows that children of Australian-born parents and parents of English-speaking origin had much more consistent profiles than did children both or one of whose parents were of non-English-speaking origin: they were more likely to be consistently high (17% and 19% compared with 11% and 15% respectively), or consistently low (27% and 29% compared with 25% and 16% respectively), or consistently medium (6% and 4% compared with 3% and 4% respectively). In keeping with our assumption that children of non-English-speaking origin commonly import into the school situation ideas that run counter to the Institutional Ideology, a considerably larger proportion of these students (61% of those with parents from non-English-speaking countries, 65% of those with one parent of English-speaking and one of non-English-speaking origin) had inconsistent profiles compared with the children of parents born in Australia or other English-speaking countries (50% and 48% respectively). The 'mismatches' of students of non-English-speaking origin were due mainly to the combination of <u>high</u> aspirations with medium or low IQ and SC/HSC results; the 'mismatches' of other students came mainly from the combination of <u>low</u> aspirations with medium or high IQ and SC/HSC results.

Table 2 and Diagram 1 have already shown that there is more variation from one ethnic group of non-English-speaking origin to another than there is between all students of non-English-speaking origin and all children of Australian or other English-speaking origin. The last main set of findings we wish to introduce shows that the comparatively higher accreditation achieved by migrant students of non-English-speaking origin is maintained when the groups are sub-divided into higher and lower

socio-economic status (SES). SES was measured by the 16 point ANU status scale based on father's occupation (Broom et al., 1977), but for the present purposes the scale has been dichotomised into higher and lower SES. Table 4 and Diagram 2 show that when groups of students of similar IQ (also dichotomised), similar SES, or similar IQ and SES, are compared, those with two parents of non-English-speaking origin were consistently more likely to aspire to continue to the HSC than were any other categories of students. The results also indicate that in general, when similar IQ and SES groups are compared, children of non-English-speaking background did as well as or better than other students in terms of SC results. However, due to the comparatively large proportion of low IQ students in the low SES group, migrants of low SES overall gained much poorer results than did other students of low SES: 55% had medium or high SC results, compared with 65% for Australians.

However, in the case of migrant children of non-English-speaking origin, educational aspirations played a bigger part in whether they remained at school to the HSC than did IQ, SC results or SES (Tables 3 and 4 and Diagram 2). In contrast, these latter indications are important predictors of whether students with Australian-born parents will leave school. Table 4 and Diagram 2 also show that when groups of students of similar IQ, similar SES, or similar IQ and SES, are compared, those with two parents of non-English-speaking origin were consistently more likely to remain at school to the HSC than were other categories of students.

We are here taking both SES and SC results at face value, as it were, because they represent powerful definitions of reality in our educational and occupational systems. SES, particularly in the simple classification used here, is of course a very crude index of economic class, of life style and of how individuals and families are perceived and treated by others. For a number of reasons (e.g., change of job due to migration, non-recognition of overseas qualifications, discrepancy between job and economic statuses), SES may be a quite misleading index in the case of migrants of non-English-speaking origin. Our data from

students and parents will allow us to deal with the meaning of SES position in a much more complex way than we have done here. Similarly, SC results, as measured for this purpose, reflect teachers' evaluations of students' ability (or potential for performance), which are, we believe, influenced by numerous factors that have nothing to do with the competencies that SC is supposed to be measuring; at the same time, however, teachers, students, parents and employers treat SC results as if they had some straightforward objective validity and predictive value. Again, further analysis of our data will clarify how these teacher evaluations are established and how they influence children's careers. HSC results are definitions that derive from yet another order (mainly the tertiary educational institutions); they too are taken at face value (see Meade, 1978: Chapter 9), but because the HSC comes at the end of secondary schooling, it has a different defining function within schools from the SC (i.e., students are classified in anticipation of HSC performance, not in terms of the achievement itself.)

The full import of the finding that IQ and SES have a strong relation to accreditation (here signified by SC results and retention to the HSC) becomes apparent when we turn to the distribution of the sample in terms of SES and IQ, shown in Table 5 and Diagram 3. Here we see that children with both parents born in a non-English-speaking country are very heavily concentrated in the lower IQ group (66% compared with 41% of children of Australian-born parents), in the lower SES group (79% compared with 55%) and in the lower IQ and SES group (55% compared with 25%). In spite of this heavily skewed distribution of migrant children of non-English-speaking origin, the accreditation comparison between the total samples of children of non-English-speaking and of Australian origin is very much in favour of the migrant children.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Before summarising what seem to us the most salient points to be drawn from the survey data in the light of the theoretical approaches referred to earlier, we should like to stress that the meaning of the more accessible information presented here will be more fully explored as we go further into the data, in particular the open-ended responses of students expressing their own experience and attitudes.

First, differences among migrants of different non-English-speaking background are so great that to pool all the students together in a single category is often very misleading. We cannot present the evidence for these inter-ethnic differences here (apart from Table 2), nor do we know how far the differences appearing in our results are affected by the varying (and possibly selective) distributions of migrant groups between state and independent schools. We can, however, give some indication of the pervasiveness of these differences by saying that, on virtually all our measures of performance, aspirations and accreditation, the cateogry of students of non-English-speaking origin has higher standard deviations than have students of Australian-born parents - that is, their scores show more spread and variation. How to identify the meaning of these differences, how to present them and what conclusions to draw from them are, however, extremely difficult questions. Much previous research has documented or hinted at such differences, but all research that attempts, through representative samples, to say something about the population as a whole (or large segments of the total population, like all children attending state schools) suffers from the fact that in such inquiries it is not possible to obtain sub-samples big enough for reliable conclusions to be drawn about the smaller migrant groups; the result is that the experience of the larger groups - in Australia, particularly the Greeks, Italians and Yugoslavs - is often unjustifiably taken to stand for the experience of migrants as a whole (see Martin, 1978:168). There is also the abiding problem of identifying the particularly disadvantaged

position of some groups without at the same time doing them the serious disservice of stigmatising them. We have found no way out of these dilemmas, but our awareness of them is reflected in our final comments on the policy implications of the study.

Second, our evidence confirms the findings of other recent studies (e.g. Connell et al., 1975; Taft, 1975; Rosier, 1978) that large numbers of children from non-English-speaking ethnic groups reject the Institutional Ideology by clinging to high aspirations and staying at school despite a low level of performance as the school assesses it. We can add a little more about the context within which this non-conformist behaviour occurs. So far as matters that are within the more or less autonomous control of the family are concerned, the family often directs its influence towards neutralising the significance of poor performance and making high aspirations come true (e.g., in grade 10, 38% of children of Australian-born parents and 63% of children of parents from non-English-speaking countries said that their mother would be disappointed if they did not go on to HSC, and 36% and 60% respectively said that their father would be disappointed); in the interviews, too, parents of non-English-speaking origin unmistakeably conveyed high educational aspirations for their children (the parent interviews showed that the percentage of parents who wanted their children to continue at school to the HSC was 48% for Australian parents, 68% for Yugoslavs, 69% for Italians, 70% for Lebanese and 84% for Greeks); children of non-English-speaking origin also reported watching less TV than other children and studying longer hours (61% of children of Australian origin and 53% of children of non-English-speaking origin said they watched more than 11 hours of TV per school week, Monday to Friday; 44% of the former and 63% of the latter group said they studied more than 6 hours during each full week, Monday to Sunday). In the school context students of non-English-speaking origin often face the kind of hostile environment that might be expected to make them leave school rather than stay on. One example of student attitudes that suggests this hostility comes from responses to the pair of attitude statements: 'Having a lot of migrants has been a very good thing for this country' and 'Having a lot of migrants has not been so good for this country'. The percentage of

students who chose the first statement as best expressing their own opinion rather than the second, according to parents' country of birth, was 17% for Australian, 52% for other English-speaking migrants, 70% for Maltese, 78% for Yugoslavs, 81% for Italians and Lebanese and 88% for Greeks. Preliminary analysis of answers to two open-ended questions asked in grade 10 also suggests that there are at least pockets of Australian children with highly aggressive attitudes towards migrants. In answer to the question, 'How have migrants settled into this country?', one Australian student wrote:

> I hate the bastards! They pick fights and are annoying. I hate them, I hate them, I hate them! They even fight when there going to get done. They eat garlic and breath all over you.

Another replied to the question, 'is it a good idea for children of parents from non-English-speaking countries to learn their parents' language?', with:

> Yes, if and only if they do not speak it in Australia. Put it this way, they can jabber and blab to their hearts content as long as they don't annoy me or any other Aussies. IT JUST AINT NATURAL.

We have little evidence of teacher attitudes as expressed by the teachers themselves, but a great deal of information on how students see teachers' attitudes and behaviour towards them. Preliminary analysis of this information indicates that children of low IQ, and particularly children of low IQ and low SES, are more likely than other students to find teachers indifferent or even discouraging. Once allocated to the lower streams (which may be on the basis of performance in English or language-based tests), migrant students (probably more so than others) have little chance of moving into the top streams: teachers think that they are doing their duty in trying to make such students realistic about their chances of future education and jobs (see also Isaacs, 1978). On the other hand, migrant students who are defined as bright seem, on our evidence, often to attract all the attention and encouragement that they want from teachers. We shall note shortly how the conformist behaviour

of migrants with strong motivation to succeed at school might elicit this kind of teacher support.

Third, the experience of the migrant students in our study is not to be understood in terms of the simple alternatives of stunting and liberating theories. Rejection of their families, lack of self-esteem and even self-hatred appear in children of all birthplace groups, but the particular content of these attitudes and feelings is often explicitly related to the migrant child's circumstances. A boy whose parents came from Eastern Europe wrote in answer to the question, 'Write a few lines in answer to the question: how have migrants settled into this country?': 'Badly very badly they have not got (good?) job. What do they do. There lazy good for nothing Bums.'

Somewhere between the stunting and liberating effects of migration are patterns of coping that may seem outwardly normal and undramatic, but which, on the part of students of non-English-speaking backgrounds, require remarkable insight (that is, grasping clues to rewarded and punished behaviour) and immense self-control and hard work. As C.A. Valentine says in his critique of the culture of poverty (quoted by Flude in Flude and Ahier eds., 1974:35):

> One need not romanticise about the poor to recognise that, especially among the more oppressed ethnic minorities in poverty, extraordinary individual capabilities are often required simply to survive socially and remain intact psychologically.

We expect to be able to demonstrate a number of patterns of accommodation by which children of non-English-speaking origin survive in our high schools. One pattern often (according to our parent interviews) encouraged in the family, is strict conformity to the requirements of the authority structure, based in some cases on wholehearted acceptance of the school's authority (which may often pay off in terms of favourable teacher reactions) and in other cases on the view that the school commands obedience and respect because it is the crucial agency for socialising migrant children and assimilating them into Australian society.

It would be possible to account for both the low levels of accreditation achieved by some migrant children, particularly of low IQ and low SES, and the success of others in terms of cultural deprivation theories: those who fail to overcome the deficits of their home background go under, those who compensate for these deficits by taking over the values and practices of the school survive. As a number of critics of cultural deprivation theories have pointed out, however (see, e.g., Keddie ed., 1973), explanations in these terms take the school's definitions of 'rich' and 'deficient' environments for granted and ignore competencies and experiences that lie outside the school's narrow conception of valuable skills and knowledge. We expect the survey to yield some mapping of what the unacknowledged accomplishments of migrant children might be.

Already we can say that some children of non-English-speaking origin reveal an unusual degree of maturity and perception that appears to be related to their coming to terms with the immediate personal experience of living in an ethnically plural society. These students emerge as the advantaged ones compared with the uptight and defensive Australians quoted above. A 15 year old Asian girl who arrived in Australia when she was nine, whose parents are unskilled workers and whose home language is not English, gave an example of this kind of advantage in her perceptive answer to the question, 'Write a few lines about how you find teachers at your school':

> One or two teachers in particular have truly earned my respect. Though they are superior to pupils both in knowledge and age (and experience with people) they don't try to bend pupils to their wills, but allow pupils to express their thoughts, and treat them with philosophical tolerance. Some teachers repulse me because of their strict disciplinarian attitudes. Even trying to put myself in their places, considering their work pressures and observing annoying habits of some pupils, I still feel they over-exercise their rights as teachers. Some teachers are undoubtedly biased, not necessarily against me but against other people who don't necessarily deserve it.

Our fourth and concluding point relates this survey of schools, students and their families to the wider social and economic structure. Our information stops at the point at which students leave school, or, in the case of some of those who left before grade 11, at the point of their immediate post-school situation. We have shown that different groups of students (in terms of ethnic origin, IQ and SES) emerge from school with different kinds of accreditation, but we do not know what meaning will be attached to these differences when these students face employers, or when they try to enter tertiary institutions where admission is not automatically determined by SC or HSC results. We do know, however, that a powerful overseas literature (see particularly Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Sharp and Green, 1975) claims that school accreditation is no more than a barrier to keep most people out of the more advantaged professions and jobs, and that factors other than accreditation determine the allocation of the better accredited to different jobs and economic levels. After a recent review of the literature that stresses the dominance of structural factors - not individual abilities or training - in distributing people through different status positions, Meade (1978:177) concludes that, 'as jobs become more scarce and youth more educated, employers will be in a position to utilise whatever non-educational job selection criteria (which may include criteria such as race and sex) they choose'. To the extent to which Australian institutions become responsive to the ethnic diversity of the population (e.g., through providing opportunities for bilinguals to train as professionals), some young people of migrant origin may find the value of their superior accreditation enhanced and may in fact be advantaged compared with Australians; on the other hand, young people of non-English-speaking and low SES background with only medium accreditation (e.g., medium to high SC results, but no HSC) are likely to discover that their accreditation is worth less than the similar qualifications of the very large number of Australian children in this category.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The final points we wish to make concern the policy implications of our study. A superficial look at our findings might suggest that, because children of non-English-speaking origin are, on some counts, doing better than Australians, then resources are no longer needed for migrant and multicultural education. On the contrary, we believe that our inquiry points unmistakeably to the need for resources (of talent and imagination as well as money) in three broad areas.

One is to break up the dominance of the Institutional Ideology and encourage the education system (not only the high schools themselves) to serve the children characterised as of low IQ and low SES whom it now does its best to throw off - and 'serving' here involves specific changes in practices of assessing brightness, in streaming and curriculum and in teacher-student-parent relations, in recognition of the fact that a large proportion of these children are of non-English-speaking origin.

Second, resources are needed to dislodge the narrow ethnocentrism and explicit anti-migrant attitudes that appear to be entrenched in some schools and to develop the capacity of all children to benefit from living in an ethnically plural society - which we take to be the rationale for multi-cultural education.

Third, resources are required for monitoring and research along two lines. One is to test systematically in the Australian context the recent radical overseas critiques of education and of the relation of educational accreditation to the distribution of particular categories of people throughout the larger social structure. The other is to bring into public awareness the reality of the school experience of teachers, students and parents. At the moment, each of these groups - in different degrees - finds their interests and identities defined by others (often defined out of existance) and their conceptions of their own experience

devalued or ignored. A more authentic appreciation of what the education system is and does is a necessary step in encouraging those concerned with education to act more effectively and creatively, and with more conviction, in a climate where the adoption of new fashions often pushes the case for more fundamental change out of sight.

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TABLE 1

INSTRUMENTS RELATING TO THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS

| Grade when measured | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 9, 1974 | Grade 10, 1975 | Grade 11, 1976 | Grade 12, 1977 |
| Student questionnaire | Student questionnaire | Student questionnaire | Higher School Certificate (HSC) results |
| | Leavers questionnaire | Leavers questionnaire | |
| Intellectual abilities and aptitudes: | Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT, field dependence-independence) | Teachers questionnaire | |
| (a) The ACER Higher Test - form M(ML + MQ, linguistic and quantitative abilities) | Student essays - four topics | | |
| (b) Listening Comprehension | | | |
| (c) Vocabulary knowledge | School Certificate (SC) results | | |
| (d) The Standard Progressive Matrices | | | |
| Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) | Parent interviews with 690 families | | |

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## TABLE 2A

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH
All students

| Parents' country of birth | Percentage distribution | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Left before School Certificate | Low School Cert. (a) | Medium School Cert. (a) | High School Cert. (a) | Low HSC (0-211) | Medium HSC (212-297) | High HSC (298-489) | TOTAL |
| Both Australian (N=1659) | 8 | 28 | 21 | 13 | 8 | 12 | 10 | 100 |
| | 8 | | 62 | | | 30 | | 100 |
| Both non-English-speaking countries (b) (N=635) | 9 | 30 | 16 | 6 | 15 | 15 | 11 | 100 |
| | 9 | | 52 | | | 41 | | 100 |
| Another or different English-speaking countries (N=485) | 9 | 30 | 17 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 10 | 100 |
| | 9 | | 57 | | | 35 | | 100 |
| One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking country (N=121) | 12 | 20 | 18 | 7 | 15 | 12 | 16 | 100 |
| | 12 | | 45 | | | 43 | | 100 |
| TOTALS (Percentages) | 8 | 28 | 19 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 100 |
| | 8 | | 58 | | | 35 | | 100 |
| TOTALS (Number) | 244 | 824 | 545 | 314 | 304 | 364 | 305 | 2900 |
| | 244 | | 1683 | | | 973 | | 2900 |

(a) School Certificate, High - 4 to 6 school subjects taken at 'advanced' level
Medium - 1 to 3 school subjects taken at 'advanced' level
Low - All school subjects taken at ordinary level or some combination of 'ordinary' and 'modified'.

(b) Table 2B contains a more detailed breakdown of this group.

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## TABLE 2B

### SCHOOL ACCREDITATION BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

| Parents' country of birth | Percentage distribution | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Left before School Certificate | Low School Cert. | Medium School Cert. | High School Cert. | Low HSC (0-211) | Medium HSC (212-297) | High HSC (298-481) | TOTAL |
| Both Greek (N=109) | 5 | 25 | 9 | 5 | 25 | 19 | 13 | 100 |
| | 5 | | 39 | | | 57 | | 100 |
| Both Italian (N=87) | 13 | 29 | 16 | (c) | 12 | 13 | 14 | 100 |
| | 13 | | 50 | | | 39 | | 100 |
| Both Lebanese (N=48) | 17 | 38 | 17 | - | 13 | 10 | - | 100 |
| | 17 | | 57 | | | 27 | | 100 |
| Both Maltese (N=37) | 19 | 46 | 22 | - | - | - | - | 100 |
| | 19 | | 73 | | | 8 | | 100 |
| Both Yugoslav (N=51) | 10 | 26 | 16 | - | 24 | 16 | - | 100 |
| | 10 | | 46 | | | 46 | | 100 |
| Another non-English-speaking country (both same) (N=224) | 5 | 30 | 20 | 7 | 14 | 14 | 11 | 100 |
| | 5 | | 57 | | | 39 | | 100 |
| Different non-English-speaking countries (N=79) | 9 | 29 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 18 | 14 | 100 |
| | 9 | | 49 | | | 42 | | 100 |
| TOTALS (Percentages) | 9 | 30 | 16 | 6 | 15 | 15 | 11 | 100 |
| | 9 | | 52 | | | 41 | | 100 |
| TOTALS (Number) | 55 | 189 | 101 | 36 | 94 | 92 | 68 | 635 |
| | 55 | | 326 | | | 254 | | 635 |

(c) When numbers are less than five, percentages are not shown.



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TABLE 3

SUMMARY OF CONSISTENCY OF STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS WITH IQ AND ACCREDITATION, BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH

| Response levels | Description | Parents' country of birth | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Both Australian | Both non-English-speaking countries | Another or different English-speaking countries | One parent English-speaking other non-English-speaking countries | TOTAL |
| | | % | % | % | % | % |
| Consistently High | Aspired to HSC in either grade 9 or 10 or both<br>High IQ (ML + MQ; 115-135) and attained: | | | | | |
| | - High HSC (298-489) | 9 | 7 | 9 | 11 | 9 |
| | - Medium HSC (212-297) | 8 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 |
| Consistently Medium | No aspiration to HSC in either grade 9 or 10<br>Medium IQ (ML + MQ; 100-114) and attained: | | | | | |
| | - Medium SC(a) | 6 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Consistently Low | No aspiration to HSC in either grade 9 or 10: | | | | | |
| | - Medium IQ (ML + MQ: 100-114) | 10 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 8 |
| | or | | | | | |
| | - Low IQ (ML + MQ: 70-99) and either left before the SC or attained low SC(a). | 17 | 22 | 18 | 6 | 18 |
| Inconsistent | Aspiration is not consistent with IQ and/or accreditation levels | 50 | 61 | 48 | 65 | 53 |
| | TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

(a) See Table 2, note (a).

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TABLE 4

MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS,
SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS AND RETENTIVITY TO THE HSC BY LINGUISTIC AND QUANTITATIVE IQ (ML + MQ),
BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AND BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH (FOUR-WAY CLASSIFICATION)
(N=2740(a))

| Linguistic and quantitative IQ (ML + MQ) | Socio-economic status | Parents' country of birth: Both Australian | | | Both non-English-speaking countries | | | Another or different English-speaking countries | | | One parent English-speaking, other non-English-speaking country | | | TOTAL | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Aspire to HSC(b) % | High or Medium SC(c) % | Remain to HSC(d) % | Aspire to HSC % | High or Medium SC % | Remain to HSC % | Aspire to HSC % | High or Medium SC % | Remain to HSC % | Aspire to HSC % | High or Medium SC % | Remain to HSC % | Aspire to HSC % | High or Medium SC % | Remain to HSC % |
| Higher (107-135) | Higher (AHU status categories 1-8) | 74 | 92 | 51 | 93 | 98 | 73 | 83 | 92 | 57 | 77 | 100 | 59 | 78 | 93 | 55 |
| | Lower (AHU status categories 9-16) | 65 | 86 | 37 | 82 | 92 | 59 | 70 | 83 | 38 | 71 | 86 | 52 | 69 | 87 | 42 |
| Lower (70-106) | Higher | 36 | 39 | 16 | 74 | 49 | 44 | 49 | 32 | 25 | 53 | 50 | 40 | 45 | 40 | 23 |
| | Lower | 20 | 36 | 9 | 57 | 37 | 25 | 32 | 33 | 18 | 47 | 44 | 21 | 40 | 36 | 16 |
| Total Higher IQ | | 69 | 89 | 44 | 86 | 94 | 63 | 76 | 87 | 46 | 74 | 93 | 55 | 73 | 89 | 48 |
| Total Lower IQ | | 31 | 37 | 11 | 60 | 39 | 29 | 37 | 32 | 19 | 49 | 46 | 26 | 42 | 38 | 18 |
| | Total Higher SES | 61 | 75 | 39 | 83 | 73 | 58 | 71 | 71 | 45 | 69 | 85 | 53 | 66 | 74 | 43 |
| | Total Lower SES | 48 | 65 | 24 | 65 | 55 | 36 | 52 | 60 | 27 | 58 | 63 | 35 | 54 | 61 | 28 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 53 | 69 | 31 | 63 | 59 | 40 | 60 | 65 | 35 | 63 | 72 | 42 | 58 | 66 | 34 |

(a) Actual cell frequencies can be calculated directly from the values reported in Table 5, except for high and medium SC results which need to be adjusted in accordance with note 3.

(b) Relates to students aspiring to HSC in either grade 9 or grade 10 or both. Percentages are based on a total sample of 2739, due to one missing value on educational aspiration for a student with Australian parents in the High IQ, High SES group.

(c) High or Medium SC: at least one of the school subjects taken at an advanced level. Percentages are based on a total sample of 2459. This means 281 people either did not sit for the SC or their grade were not obtained.

(d) Percentages are based on the total sample of 2740 students. Of this number, 920 actually sat for the HSC. The small discrepancy between the column total percentages here and those in Table 2 results from accreditation being based on 2900 students.



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TABLE 5

COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

| Linguistic and Quantitative IQ (ML + MQ) | Socio-economic status | Parents' country of birth | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Both Australian | | Both non-English-speaking countries | | Another or different English-speaking countries | | One parent English-speaking, other non-English-speaking country | | TOTAL | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Higher | Higher | 448 | 29 | 60 | 10 | 122 | 26 | 34 | 29 | 664 | 24 |
| | Lower | 467 | 30 | 142 | 24 | 148 | 32 | 31 | 26 | 788 | 29 |
| Lower | Higher | 245 | 16 | 63 | 11 | 65 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 393 | 14 |
| | Lower | 396 | 25 | 328 | 55 | 133 | 28 | 38 | 33 | 895 | 33 |
| Total Higher IQ | | 915 | 59 | 202 | 34 | 270 | 58 | 65 | 55 | 1452 | 53 |
| Total Lower IQ | | 641 | 41 | 396 | 66 | 198 | 42 | 53 | 45 | 1208 | 47 |
| | Total Higher SES | 693 | 45 | 128 | 21 | 187 | 40 | 49 | 42 | 1057 | 39 |
| | Total Lower SES | 863 | 55 | 70 | 79 | 281 | 60 | 69 | 59 | 1683 | 61 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 1556 | 100 | 598 | 100 | 468 | 100 | 118 | 100 | 2740 | 100 |

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## TABLE 6

### STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TO MIGRANTS BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH

| Parents' country of birth | First pair of attitude statements (a) Having a lot of migrants has been very good thing for this country (b) Having a lot of migrants has not been so good for this country | | | Second pair of attitude statements (a) Australians had better look out, or they will find that migrants will take over the country (b) Migrants have added much of value to the country | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N who answered | Percentage response of which statement chosen | | N who answered | Percentage response of which statement chosen | |
| | | (a) | (b) | | (a) | (b) |
| Both Australian | 1435 | 17 | 83 | 1425 | 75 | 25 |
| Both Greek | 99 | 88 | 12 | 99 | 11 | 89 |
| Both Italian | 72 | 81 | 19 | 71 | 11 | 89 |
| Both Lebanese | 36 | 81 | 19 | 37 | 11 | 89 |
| Both Maltese | 27 | 70 | 30 | 27 | 22 | 78 |
| Both Yugoslav | 45 | 78 | 22 | 45 | 13 | 87 |
| Another non-English speaking country (both same) | 199 | 77 | 23 | 198 | 22 | 78 |
| Another or different English Speaking countries | 413 | 46 | 54 | 406 | 51 | 49 |
| Different non-English speaking countries | 64 | 75 | 25 | 65 | 25 | 75 |
| One parent English speaking, other non-English speaking | 96 | 52 | 48 | 94 | 42 | 59 |



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## LIST OF DIAGRAMS


Diagram 1 — SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH

(a) All Students

(b) Students with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries

Diagram 2 — MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS AND RETENTIVITY TO THE HSC, BY LINGUISTIC AND QUANTITATIVE IQ (ML + MQ), BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AND BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH (FOUR-WAY CLASSIFICATION)

Diagram 3 — COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

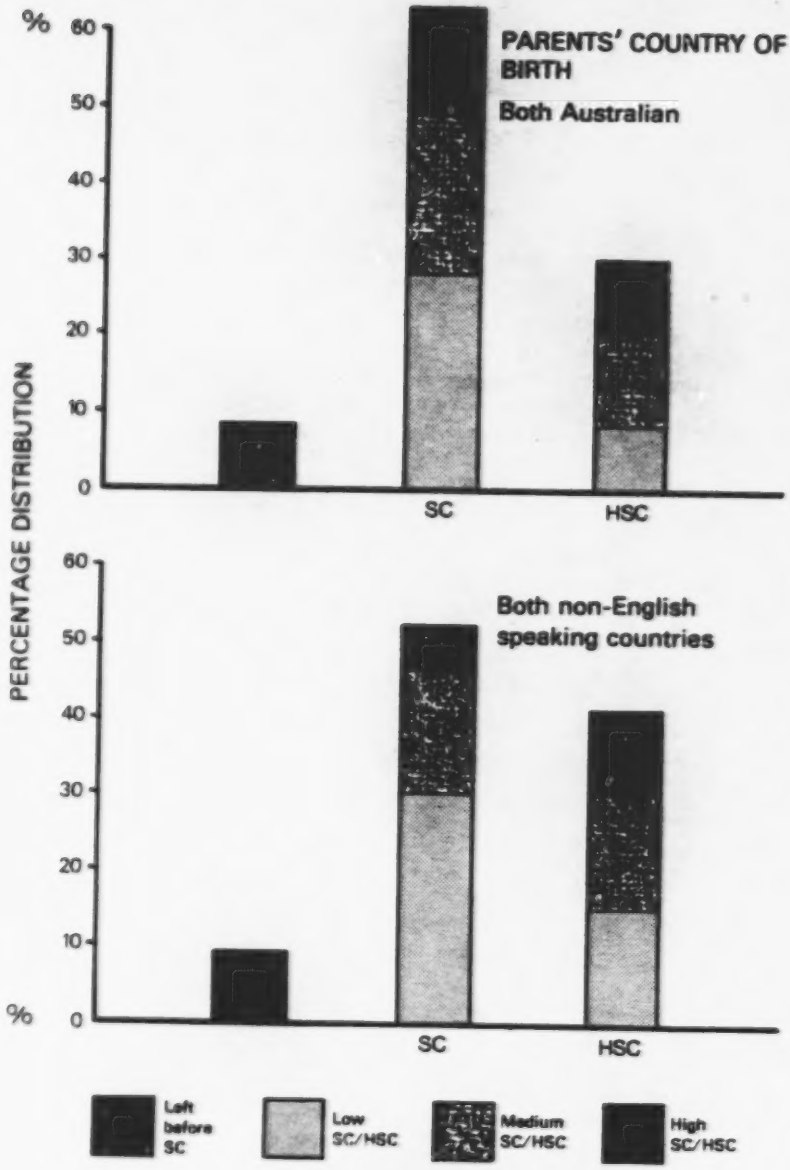
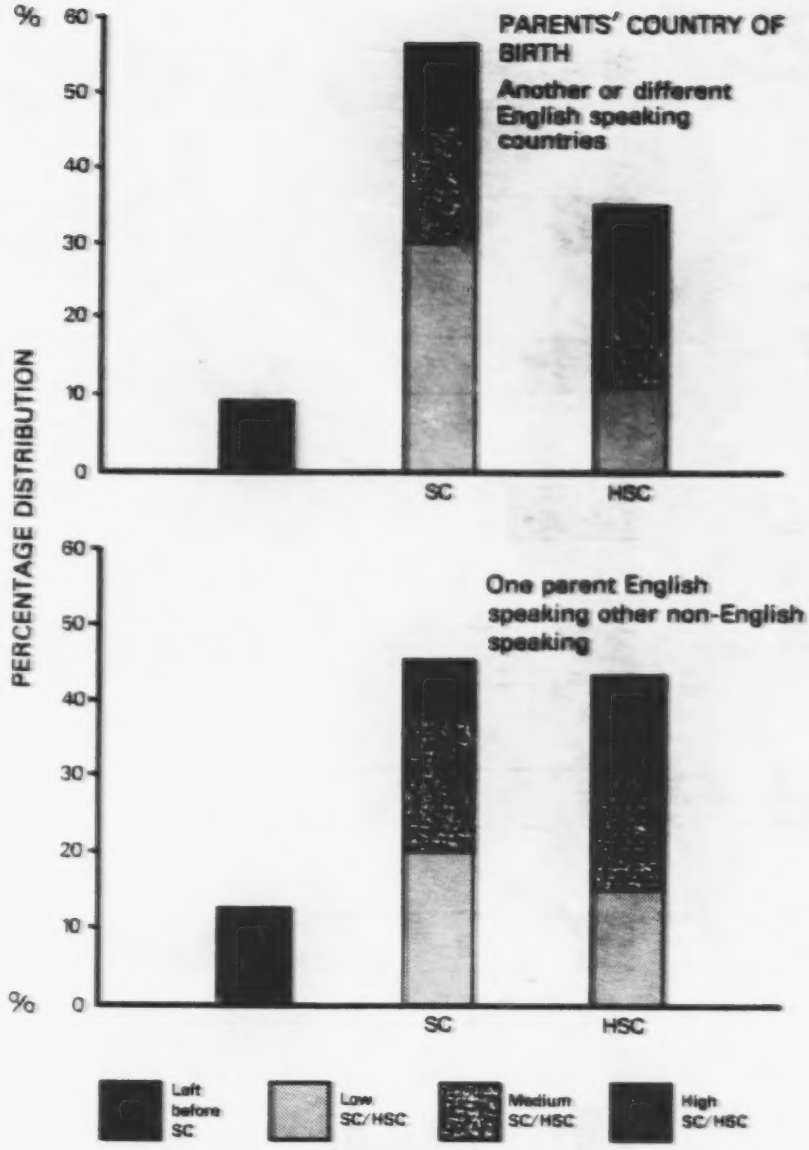


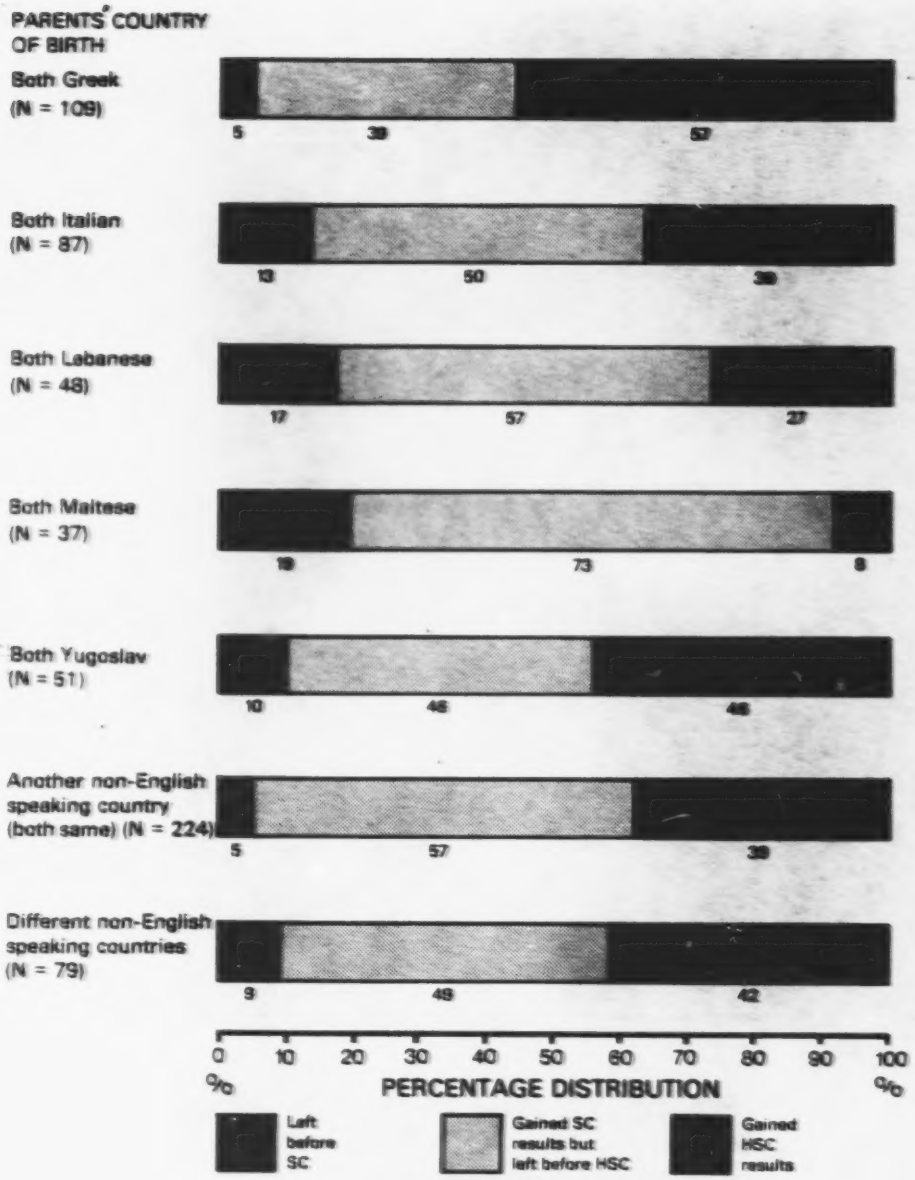

**DIAGRAM 1**

**SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH.**
**(a) All Students** ( See notes for Table 2 )




## DIAGRAM 1 (Cont.)

**SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH.**
**(a) All Students** ( See notes for Table 2 )

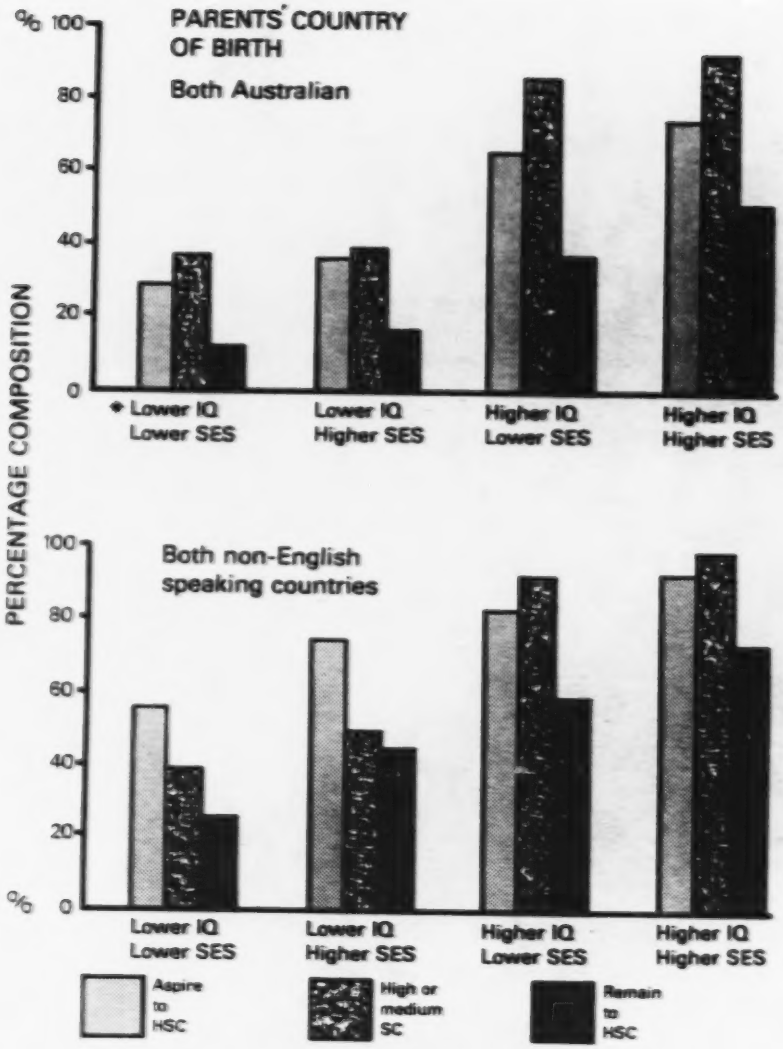



## DIAGRAM 1 (Cont.)

**SCHOOL ACCREDITATION, BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH**

**(b) Students with parents born in Non-English-speaking countries**

(See notes for Table 2)




## DIAGRAM 2

**MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS AND RETENTIVITY TO THE HSC, BY LINGUISTIC AND QUANTITATIVE IQ (ML + MQ), BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AND BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH (FOUR-WAY CLASSIFICATION)**

( See notes to Table 4 )

* See row heading descriptions, Table 4

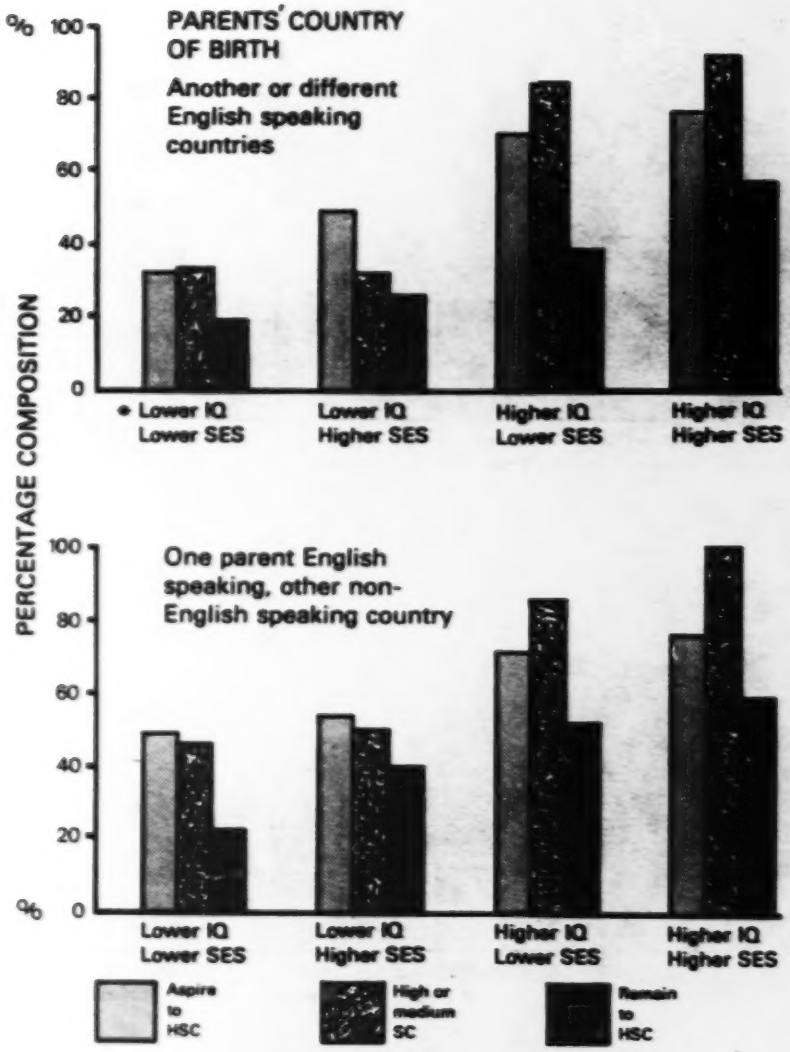
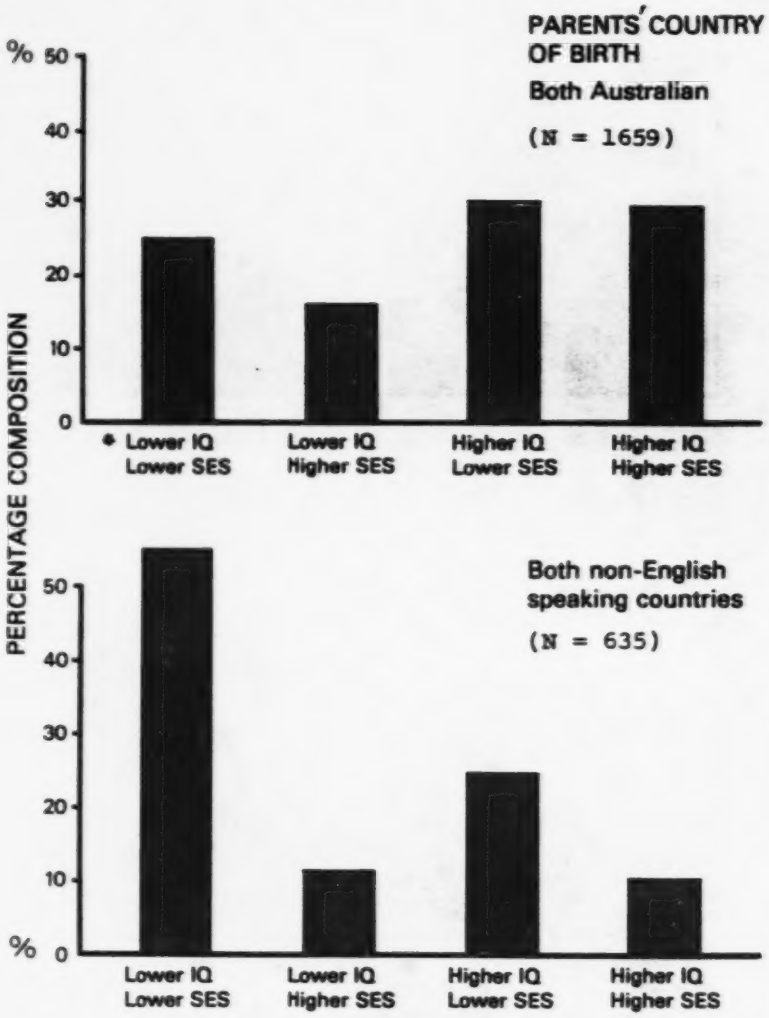



**DIAGRAM 2 (Cont.)**

**MEASURES OF EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS AND RETENTIVITY TO THE HSC, BY LINGUISTIC AND QUANTITATIVE IQ (ML + MQ), BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AND BY PARENTS' COUNTRY OF BIRTH (FOUR-WAY CLASSIFICATION)**

( See notes to Table 4 )

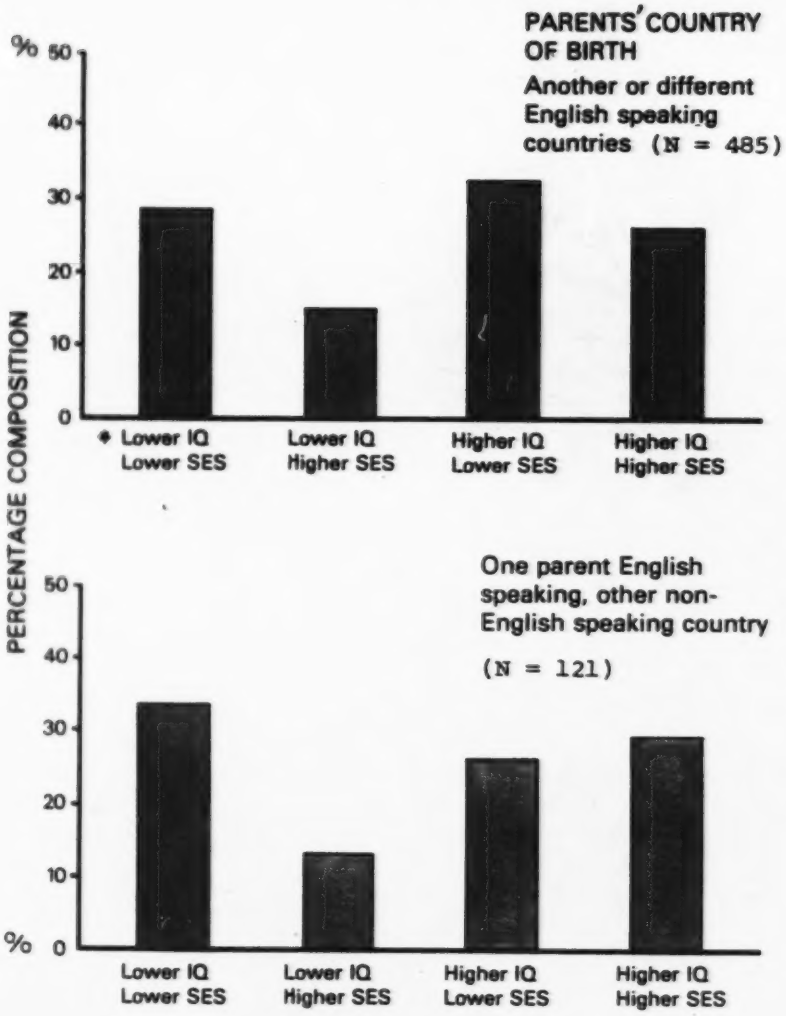
* See row heading descriptions, Table 4




## DIAGRAM 3

### COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

* See row heading descriptions, Table 4




## DIAGRAM 3 (Cont.)

### COMPOSITION OF SAMPLE

* See row heading descriptions, Table 4